

Robert J. Pash

2019 JUN 27 A 10:00

TOWN COUNCIL MAJORITY OFFICE
REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION AND DISPOSITION COMMITTEE
TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

JUNE 20, 2019

PRESENT Linda Russo, Chair, Councillors Ram Aberasturia and Caroline Torres

ALSO Rich Gentile, Assistant Corporation Counsel

PRESENT Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director, EHHA
Thomas R. Candrick, Jr., Attorney for EHHA
Helen Muniz, Carabetta
James Kate, Chair, East Hartford Housing Authority

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Russo called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 15, 2019 Meeting

MOTION By Ram Aberasturia
seconded by Caroline Torres
to **approve** the minutes of the May 15, 2019 meeting.
Motion carried 3/0.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO SPEAK

Christopher Pliszka, EHHA Finance Director, read a statement that the minutes from the May 15th meeting do not accurately reflect the discussion of the Columbus Street Extension issue.

OLD BUSINESS

Columbus Street Extension – Veterans Terrace

Chair Russo stated that Debra Bouchard, Executive Director of the EHHA, sent a letter to the Real Estate Committee dated June 5, 2019, in which Ms. Bouchard states that granting the town a right of first refusal on 546 Burnside Avenue (EHHA's offices) as consideration for Columbus Circle Extension will not be pursued by the EHHA. Instead EHHA proposes to pay the Town \$5,000 for the conveyance of the road.

Thomas Candrick, Attorney for EHHA, stated that at this point the offer on the table is the cash transaction of \$5000 for the road. Attorney Candrick reported that the EHHA believes the right of first refusal is very speculative and due to time constraints and the need to get the application in, the cash offer is what the EHHA will pursue.

After discussion among those present regarding the right of first refusal vs the cash offer, Assistant Corporation Counsel Rich Gentile summarized the issue as follows: At the last Real Estate meeting (May 15, 2019), the Committee members discussed the difference between a true option to purchase and a right of first refusal. The letter from the East Hartford Housing Authority dated May 15th, was the right of first refusal. Discussions ensued at that meeting on the viability of moving the Housing Authority's administrative offices to Veterans Terrace and what the costs might be. The EHHA was asked to estimate the cost and come back to the Committee with that number.

Attorney Gentile stated that the Committee understands that the relocation of the EHHA's offices may be problematic given costs and revenue sources. However, the Committee asked if the right of first refusal for five years as presented in the May 15th letter is still on the table. Attorney Candrick asked for a brief recess and the Chair agreed (5:50 p.m.) The meeting reconvened at 5:55 p.m. at which point Attorney Candrick proposed the following:

(1) get the road abandoned and conveyed; (2) let phases II and III proceed in consideration of the \$5000; and (3) have further discussions with the EHHA regarding rights of first refusal.

Chair Russo reiterated that the right of first refusal is simple: both parties will agree that if at some point in time in the next five years the EHHA wants to sell 546 Burnside Avenue, they will come to the town first. That is what was offered in the May 15th letter from EHHA to the Real Estate Committee.

It was agreed that both parties – the Real Estate Acquisition & Disposition Committee and the East Hartford Housing Authority – would meet again after the East Hartford Housing Authority had the opportunity to discuss the issue of the right of first refusal with its Board of Commissioners' at its next meeting scheduled for June 28, 2019. It was further agreed that the Real Estate Acquisition & Disposition Committee's recommendation should come before the full Town Council at their July 16th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION By Ram Aberasturia
 seconded by Caroline Torres
 to **adjourn** (6:10 p.m.)
 Motion carried 3/0.

cc: Town Council
 Marcia Leclerc, Mayor
 Rich Gentile, Assistant Corporation Counsel
 Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director, EHHA
 Helen Muniz, Carabetta Enterprises
 James Kate, Chair, East Hartford Housing Authority
 Thomas Candrick, Attorney; Carmody, Torrance, Sandak and Hennessey, LLP